



Submitted by [Greg Mette](#) on July 28, 2023

# Alabama's Opelika Career Center Earns NASWA Award for Exceptional Veteran Service

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WASHINGTON – The Opelika Career Center in Alabama was presented with the prestigious Mark Sanders Award at the National Association of State Workforce Agencies' (NASWA) 10th Annual Veterans Conference in Washington, D.C.

NASWA's Mark Sanders Award is bestowed each year upon one individual or group in the U.S. that provides exceptional workforce and/or job market assistance to veterans, especially those with significant barriers to obtaining and retaining employment.

"The Opelika Career Center has worked tirelessly to help assist veterans and military spouses transition back to civilian life," said Scott B. Sanders, NASWA President and CEO. "I applaud the Opelika Career Center staff on the exemplary service they provide to the men and women protecting our country and congratulate them on earning the 2023 Mark Sanders Award!"

In 2022, the Opelika Career Center, nominated by the Alabama Department of Labor, established the Citywide Careers Skills Program (CSP) in conjunction with the Opelika Mayor, Gary Fuller, and the Opelika Workforce Council. To date, 25 businesses have enrolled in the program and are instrumental in offering internships and career opportunities for transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses. The Citywide CSP also provides employers with a conduit of quality applicants for internship and apprenticeship positions in the community.

"Veterans are such an integral part of our workforce," said Alabama Secretary of Labor Fitzgerald Washington. "The skills that our veterans bring to any job are valuable, and we are working hard to ensure that while veterans transition from military service to the private sector, they are as prepared as they can be, and that they have easy access to any programs that can ease that transition. I'm proud of the staff at the Opelika Career Center for this program and the partnerships it represents."

The Opelika Career Center focuses on developing relationships with military bases, support networks, workforce boards, and businesses to enhance job opportunities for veterans. In addition to the Citywide CSP, the Opelika Career Center has organized and hosted veteran hiring events for 31 businesses, partnered with the county on a Second Chance Job Fair, and hosted resume and mock interview workshops. Through its numerous program and service partnerships, the Opelika Career Center has gone above and beyond to serve its Veterans.

Awarded annually at the NASWA Veterans Conference, the Mark Sanders Award recognizes the efforts of an entire one-stop career center whose efforts to serve Veterans go above and beyond the scope of mandatory service provision, and with a special emphasis on veterans with significant barriers to employment.

The prestigious award is named in honor of Mark Sanders who, during his career with the California Employment Development Department and in leadership positions with NASWA, was untiring in his efforts to promote excellence in services to disabled veterans.

For more information on the 2023 Veterans Conference, visit <https://www.naswa.org/conferences/2023-veterans-conference>

To see more about the Opelika Career Center, visit <https://player.vimeo.com/video/845936014>